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The Animas River flows through the center of Durango, Colo. on Aug. 7, 2015. Source: Brian Lewis/The Denver Post/Getty Images

EPA Contractor Behind CO Mine Spill Got \$381 Million From Taxpayers



Michael Bastasch

The EPA may have been trying to hide the identity of the contracting company responsible for causing a major wastewater spill in southern Colorado, but the Wall Street Journal has revealed the company's identity.

Environmental Restoration (ER) LLC, a Missouri-based firm, was the “contractor whose work caused a mine spill in Colorado that released an estimated 3 million gallons of toxic sludge into a major river system,” the WSJ was told by a source familiar with the matter. The paper also found government documents to corroborate what their source told them.

So far, the EPA has refused to publicly name the contracting company used to plug abandoned mines in southern Colorado, despite numerous attempts by The Daily Caller News Foundation and other media outlets to obtain the information. It's unclear why the agency chose not to reveal the contractor's name.

What is clear, however, is that ER has gotten \$381 million in government contracts since October 2007, according to a WSJ review of data from USAspending.gov. About \$364 million of that funding came from the EPA, but only \$37 million was given to ER for work they had done in Colorado.

When contacted by phone, TheDCNF had been informed ER's offices had closed for the day. The EPA did not return a request for comment on the WSJ's story revealing the identity of the agency's contractor.

ER contractors reportedly caused a massive wastewater spill from the Gold King Mine in southern Colorado last week. EPA-supervised workers breached a debris dam while using heavy

equipment and unleashed 3 million gallons of toxic wastewater into Cement Creek. The toxic plume eventually reached the Animas River where it's been able to spread even further, forcing Colorado and New Mexico to declare a state of emergency.

The EPA has taken responsibility for the spill and has officials on the ground working with local officials to remedy the situation. Still, local officials and Native Americans are furious with the EPA over the spill, and have not ruled out legal action to make sure the agency remains accountable.

"No agency could be more upset about the incident happening, and more dedicated in doing our job to get this right," EPA Chief Administrator Gina McCarthy said in a press conference in Durango, Colorado Wednesday. "We couldn't be more sorry. Our mission is to protect human health and the environment. We will hold ourselves to a higher standard than anyone else."

Read more: <http://dailycaller.com/2015/08/12/epa-contractor-behind-co-mine-spill-got-381-million-from-taxpayer/#ixzz3ihySuCma>